



# Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding the Major Revision and Public Consultation of the  
Capture Fisheries Standard

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## About Fair Trade USA’s Capture Fisheries Standard (CFS)

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### What is the CFS?

The CFS sets the requirements for Fair Trade Certified™ wild-capture fisheries production systems globally. It covers diverse groups of fishers, many different species, gear types, and types of vessels, along with associated land-based facilities all under one standard. We recognize that sustainability is a journey, and our standard focuses on continuous improvement over time to achieve superior social, economic, and environmental practices. Fisheries and land-based facilities are audited against criteria applicable to them. Criteria are currently grouped into the following Sections:

Section 1: Structural Requirements

Section 2: Empowerment and Community Development

Section 3: Fundamental Human Rights

Section 4: Wages, Working Conditions and Access to Services

Section 5: Resource Management

Section 6: Traceability and Transparency

Fair Trade certification, however, is more than just the standard itself. In addition to our rigorous standards, our model drive impact and value through the investment of Community Development Funds (the Fair Trade Premium) and the provision of producer support services, such as education and training on human rights, leadership, gender equity, and financial resilience.

Please visit our [website](#) to learn more about our model.



## How does the CFS benefit fishers?

The CFS benefits fishers and workers through the third-party verification of its requirements, which safeguard fishers and workers on vessels and at land-based sites by securing safe and fair working conditions, and transparent trading relationships between fishers in the program and their buyers. Furthermore, the Fair Trade Premium is a direct sum of money passed through the supply chain, untouched, to the fishers directly. The fishers democratically decide how to spend this money to meet the needs of the community and the environment.

## How was the CFS developed and how were stakeholders involved?

The CFS was developed to bring the benefits of fair trade to small- to medium-scale fishers globally in response to concerns over human rights abuses in the fishing industry, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing practices, overexploitation of fisheries resources, and a lack of transparency in seafood supply chains. While other standards for sustainable fisheries focused on the resource itself, existing certifications were not addressing human rights abuses and were largely inaccessible to small- to medium-scale fisheries due to cost, lack of capacity, and a lack of data, therefore leaving a gap in fisheries sustainability in small- to medium-scale fisheries, largely in the Global South.

The CFS was developed through a multi-stakeholder, rigorous and transparent review and revision process, which included extensive consultation on initial drafts of the CFS prior to approving the final version in 2014. This standard was developed through the guidance of a Fishery Advisory Council and an extensive public consultation process reaching a broad group of stakeholders. Feedback was then incorporated into the first iteration of the CFS. In 2017, the CFS underwent a minor standard revision to address immediate needs in the standard, including improving its structure.

Fair Trade USA is a full ISEAL member and we establish and revise standards according to the [ISEAL Code of Good Practice](#). You can see our full [Standard Development and Revision Procedure](#) for more information on the Standards and Implementation Resources team's revision process.

## About the CFS Major Revision

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### What is a major revision?

A *major* standards revision generally involves drastic changes to the standard which require a change in practice of Certificate Holders. This can include everything from the addition of new aspects in areas that were previously not addressed, drastic changes to existing requirements, and more general programmatic changes, such as changes to timelines or implementation practices. As per ISEAL best practices, a standard should undergo a major review every 5 years.

### What are the objectives of the CFS major revision?

The current iteration of the CFS has been in practice for five years now. During this time, Fair Trade USA has gained experience through the implementation of the program and we have identified areas for improvement. In general, the main objectives of the CFS major revision are as follows:

- Streamline existing requirements: Ensure criteria are clear and fit for purpose, and that they are well suited to apply to the diversity of supply chains in the fishing industry.
- Align internally with other Fair Trade USA Standards: Improve the efficiency of resource creation and overall program implementation through alignment with existing, well-established Fair Trade USA programs.



- Categorize criteria to improve applicability and accessibility: Innovate the current model to achieve desired outcomes, improve application of the program and users' experience, and ensure accessibility of diverse types of supply chains in the fishing industry.
- Innovate in response to changes in industry best practices: Best practices in the fishing industry are dynamic and changing quickly. This revision seeks to address new and emerging issues in the fishing industry.
- Increase impact on the ground for producers: Ensure requirements are feasible and meaningful to producers to enable and improve empowerment and fisher/worker well-being.

You can find more information about the CFS Revision in the [Project Plan](#).

## What are the biggest changes in the major revision of the CFS?

While many of the CFS requirements are limited to general language changes, the progress model will now conform to a scoring system similar to Fair Trade USA's Agricultural Production Standard (APS). Where previously all requirements applied to each supply chain uniformly, the CFS has been updated according to operation size according to a number of variables, including the type and size of an operation, and safety requirements for vessels according to fishing trip length.

Requirements in the CFS will now differ in timeline for some criteria depending on the type and size, or vessel trip length, of an operation. In addition to Critical Criteria which must be met according to their designated timeline, there are Progress Points assigned to a subset of criteria which must all be met by year 6 of certification, but Certificate Holders can pick and choose which to comply with and must achieve thresholds that increase over time in order to be certified. The goal is to allow for more flexible implementation of the standard as a Certificate Holder moves through the certification cycle which can be tailored according to their capacity aimed at improving user experience with the CFS and open up accessibility to new entrants.

Please review the CFS Scoring Guidance, available on our website, for additional details on the new progress model.

Additionally, the structure of the CFS has been updated in order to clarify requirements for different subsets of sites and individuals within scope of the Certificate. The new Module breakdown of the CFS is as follows:

Module 1: Empowerment

Module 2: Fundamental Human Rights at Work

Module 3: Working Agreements Between Registered Fishers and Crew Members

Module 4: Conditions of Employment for Land-based Facility Workers and Hired-labor Fishers

Module 5: Working Hours and Occupational Health and Safety on Vessels

Module 6: Working Hours and Occupational Health and Safety at Land-based Facilities

Module 7: Resource Management

Module 8: Transparency and Traceability

Module 9: Internal Management System

Additional key issues that have been included or expanded upon are grievance mechanisms, living wage, women's empowerment, and the Internal Management System.

Furthermore, we are expanding the CFS scope to include wild-capture freshwater species.



## What were the inputs into the current Draft of the CFS 2.0.0?

The revision process began in 2019 initially by processing internal information gathering over the years, through conversations with Fair Trade USA's Producer Services team and Field Coordinators, after which key issues were identified. Opportunities for alignment with other Fair Trade USA standards were identified and incorporated into the Draft. Stakeholder mapping was conducted to identify stakeholders and map out opportunities for engagement. Expert interviews were conducted throughout May to July 2020 to inform the Draft.

## Participation in the Major Revision

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### How can I provide feedback during the major revision?

Fair Trade USA invites you to provide feedback on our Draft CFS 2.0.0 during our public comment period which begins in October 5<sup>th</sup> and ends on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. All the information you need to know about opportunities to provide feedback can be found on the CFS Revision webpage which provides you with all the resources needed to participate. It is on this page you will find the Draft CFS 2.0.0 in both English and Spanish; as well as the public consultation survey in English, Spanish and Indonesian.

### What kind of feedback is Fair Trade USA looking for?

Targeted questions have been scattered throughout the Draft CFS 2.0.0 highlighted in **red text** which we have specifically highlighted as points for consultation, however feedback on any part of the Draft is encouraged. Feedback will be most useful if the public comment form is filled out after a review of the resources provided on our revision page, including the Draft CFS 2.0.0, the draft updated Requirements for Certificate Scope Under the CFS, and the CFS Scoring Guidance. The public comment form (both online and offline) contain targeted questions which are of particular interest to Fair Trade USA to inform the final version of the CFS 2.0.0.

### What happened to the feedback I provide?

Feedback received during the public consultation period will be reviewed and used to refine the Draft CFS 2.0.0 into its final version. It will be processed and analyzed along with the learnings and data that has been collected since the beginning of the revision to consolidate all inputs appropriately into the final version of the CFS 2.0.0. Fair Trade USA's external Standards Committee – consisting of experts from a variety of industry backgrounds across all of Fair Trade USA's categories – will support and advise on this revision process as well as play a critical role in understanding and reacting to stakeholder feedback on core strategic and technical issues.

A summary of the comments received during the public consultation, and Fair Trade USA responses, will be publicly shared along with the publication of the final CFS 2.0.0. Our aim is to use your feedback to ensure the CFS is relevant, impactful, and clear, and that Fair Trade USA meets the needs of our partner producers, consumers, and businesses.

We anticipate that the revised version of the CFS will be published in late Q1 2021, along with summaries of feedback received and changes made.



## Where can I find additional information and stay updated on the CFS major revision?

Information about the revision process, public consultation, and updates will be provided on the CFS Revision page on our website.

